MEMOIRS OF SAINTS

Tazkerat-ul-Awlia by Sulaiman Mako.

Written in 1216 AD. Oldest Pashto Book.

Translated by Abdul Hai Habibi.

Tazkerat-ul-Awlia (Memoirs of Saints) is the oldest work of prose in the Pashto language which we know of. It was written in 612 H/1216 AD by Sulaiman Maku, resident of Arghasan. Seven pages of this anthology of Pashto poets were discovered by Professor Abdul Hai Habibi in a mosque of Adam Khan village in Helmand valley in 1933. The hand written manuscript describes the literary prowess and life of Pashto poets and saints and is considered to be a most valuable contribution to the history of the language.

Introduction

Some 50 years ago I investigated the mosques of Helmand valley in search of old books. Among the dust laden shelves I came across the old pages of books which had been eaten away by insects in a mosque of Adam Khan village. The villagers had not disturbed this material because it contained handwritten pages from the Holy Quran also. In order to maintain remnant pages of the Holy Quran, it was the habit of the people, to keep them in an old grave or in the corner shelf of a mosque.

The inhabitants of the village were simple people. They had no idea that among the dusty papers there was an important manuscript written by a scholar of the past. These were the times of my youth. I walked from one village to the other hoping that I would find something valuable. With this desire in mind one day I came across a dilapidated manuscript. It turned out to be an old manuscript of the tenants of the Hanafi faith printed in India which had been badly damaged by insects. Among the papers there were four sheets which looked different and had escaped destruction.

The sheets measured 12.5x15 cm. The poor handwriting was in Naskh script but at times resembled Nastaliq. The manuscript had been written on white paper which in Kandahar was known as kokani (perhaps khoqandi?). The number of lines per page varied i.e. there were 16 lines on the first page, 11 on the third, 9 on the fourth and the last page had 12 lines. At first

glance it was clear that the manuscript had been written in Pashto. The title page which was in Arabic read: hada ketab-e tazkerat ul awlia (This book is Memoirs of Saints).

Reading the manuscript and its erratic spelling was a difficult task. For ten years these pages remained unread but in 1942, while I was working on the first volume of Pashtana Shu`ra (Pashtoon Poets), I managed to read the manuscript in full. The original facsimile appeared between pages 64 and 65 of the book and was thus presented for evaluation to scholars of the Pashto language.

The author of the book was Sulaiman son of Barak Khan from the Maku Sabzi tribe, resident of Arghasan who wrote the Memoirs of Saints in the year 1216 AD. The historical and literary value of these four sheets is immense. This is because they represent the first work of Pashto prose. Three hundred years later we have at our disposal the rhythmic prose of Pir Roshan and Akhund Darweza. Unlike the prose of Sulaiman we have not come across any other work in the Pashto language.

Since the finding, the manuscript first appeared in the Kabul Annual and later in Pashtana Shu`ra and the second volume of Da Pashto Adabiyato Tarekh (History of Pashto literature). It has also been described and evaluated in other papers and journals and has been scrutinized by scholars in the country and overseas.

Few works of prose and poetry of the former Aryans and other nationalities survive. Veda and Avesta are both poetic works and most Sanskrit books are also in poetry. For this reason the history of poetic works of Aryan tribes is older than their prose writings.

There is no doubt that the foundation of a language is based on prose. However, since the art of writing had not yet been developed, mankind maintained its ancient works by means of memory. Memorizing poetry is easier than prose. For this reason Aryan poets converted their religious sermons to poetry. Social sentiments of valor were also recited in poetry. The ancient hymns of Veda are a result of such work by poets. Avesta is also a poetic composition of the songs of Zooraster and his followers. The ancient Greek poems, Iliad and Odyssey, are considered to be Homer's songs of valor.

We also come across poetic works in the history of Pashto literature in the early period after Islam. Until 600 H/1210 AD we do not know of any work of prose in the language. We are aware of only one book entitled Da Saloo Wazhma (Desert Breeze), a large part of which is composed of poetic works. This title has been referred to in various books over the centuries hence we know of its existence.

As the Pashto language has been known mainly through poetry therefore it is inevitable that it had works of prose also. Due to the absence of a written manuscript its prose was not recorded. Any written document was probably lost with the passing of time. It is for this reason that in old texts we have been unable to come across any work of prose until the seventh century Hejira. We have at our disposal prose writings from the medieval era and know authors who wrote in prose.

Prior to the Mongol raids i.e. before 1210 AD Ghor, Helmand and Arghandab and the Tarnak valley were the literary centers of the Pashto language. These great cultural centers were totally obliterated by the Mongol hordes and it is possible that a large number of books were destroyed in the process.

There is strong evidence that the prose written at the time, which is at our disposal, was written in a fluent and eloquent style. When the style of writing reaches such a level it has completed its original stages of development. From this we can deduce that the language had undergone a long period of transformation, perhaps two or three centuries of development had taken place in Pashto prose to have been written with such clarity during the seventh century Hejira.

After this introduction let me introduce the oldest known prose writer of Pashto. Later I will discuss his work and its particularities.

Sulaiman Maku: The author of Tazkerat-ul-Awlia (612H/1216 AD)

Among the old Pashto writers whom we know Sulaiman Maku ranks prominently as a distinguished writer. He is the son of Barak Khan Sabzai Maku who lived in the Arghasan region of Kandahar. A small number of the Maku clan still live in this region. They belong to the Abdali (Durrani) lineage. Sulaiman was a learned writer from this clan. He traveled in the valleys and mountains of Pashtoonkhwa and met prominent scholars and saints of the time.

He states: "I traveled extensively among the mountains and villages of Pashtoonkhwa in 612 H. My mission was to see and collect the works of learned men." It seems that after this useful journey he was able to collate the works of literary figures and write their anthology in the form of Memoirs of Saints which includes their views and poetry. Unfortunately a large part of the book is missing but I found the first seven pages in 1933 in the province of Kandahar.

Sulaiman Maku is one of the first historian and writer of the Pashto language. These few pages represent a significant document of Pashto literature and its history and the importance of the work has changed the historical perspective of the language.

Sulaiman Maku the Historian

This anthology is a detailed history of Pashto literary figures in which Sulaiman relates to the life of each author. He describes their spiritual and literary status and then presents samples of their poetry and sayings.

The work shows that Sulaiman wrote the book in a manner in which he wanted to record events of the life of the authors. He describes how an individual author lived, where his domicile was and to which family he belonged. He also provides samples of their poems which people remembered.

During his journey he managed to seek the most learned figures and probed into the works of those writers who had passed away. He spent a great deal of time searching and recording historical events. In his introduction he states: "In the year six hundred and twelve Hejira I searched in the villages of Pashtoonkhwa looking for the works of learned men, and was in the quest to seek men of erudition in every direction and put myself at their service. When this journey finally came to an end I returned home. After resting for a while I asked God to help me write the anthology of these learned men so that Pashtoons my read their poetry and sayings."1

From this it is clear that Tazkerate Sulaiman has chronologized his observations and what he saw and heard during his journey. Like an experienced historian he describes the events and refers to his personal communications with other Pashtoons.

The Memoirs of Saints is an important document which reflects the history of the Pashto language. The seven pages of the book gives an account of the following poets. 1) Shaikh Betnai; 2) Malikyar Gharsheen; 3) Shaikh Ismail and 4) Qutbuddin Bakhtyar.

It should be mentioned that while writing about the history of learned Pashtoons Sulaiman does not follow the style which was expounded in Tazkerat-ul-Awlia of Shaikh A`thar. This is because Shaikh A`thar has only presented narrations of piety of the saints. Sulaiman, on the other hand, describes the life of the authors, their character, families and literary standing. This shows that he was an eminent historian. His book is not just based on Sufism but represents a rare comprehensive undertaking of literature and poetry.2

During the time of Sulaiman Maku several anthologies were written in the Persian language, the most famous of which are, Tazkerate Awlia of A`thar and the other is a recollection of poetry known as Lubab-al-Lubab, written by Mohammad A`ufi around 618 H/1221 AD. Shaikh A`thar's work does not have a historical connotation. But prior to A`thar, Kashf al Mahjoob describes the character, life and esteemed position of Sufis and contains some references to historical events. Sulaiman's Tazkera resembles Ali Hajweiri Ghaznavi's book in some respects. While Lubab al Lubab is an anthology of Persian poets, it does not document historical events precisely. A large part of it merely represents samples of their poetry only.

Sulaiman's memoirs is unique because it describes their life and character, provides samples of their poetic works and gives an account of their philosophy and spiritual standing. Thus it is a comprehensive undertaking and Sulaiman can be considered a prominent researcher and writer of the time.

Prior to him we do not know of any work of prose in the Pashto language which could tell us what the style of writing was during the time. Sulaiman's prolific style shows that Pashto prose was well nurtured and was as advanced as Persian prose of the Ghaznavid and Ghorid eras.

By looking analytically at Sulaiman's prose its growth can be related to three factors which were present in the literary environment of the time.

1) The influence of Pashto language: Sulaiman was a Pashtoon and spoke Pashto. It is clear that these factors had a profound effect on his style of writing. It is possible that the style of other writers also had a heavy influence on his penmanship.

2) The great literary movement of Persian, to which Sulaiman was inevitably exposed, must also have affected his style of writing.

3) During his era Persian prose had been well developed. It had reached its essence in Ghazni, Khorasan and India. Tarekh-e Baihaqi, Zein al Akhbar, Mohammad O`ufi's Lubab al Lubab, Jawame` al Hekayat, Tarekh-e Seistan and Tabakat-e Nasiri are important prose works of the time. As Pashto was also being developed in the same atmosphere, the effect of Persian prose on Pashto literature was thus a natural phenomenon.

During this time the Arabic language and its literature were also fully developed. In the beginning Persian literature nurtured under the influence of Arabic. Such influence can be easily seen in Persian books written around 500 H/1107 AD. As Pashtoons also had close ties with Arabic culture, therefore the influence of Arabic can also be traced in Pashto literature.

These factors prevailed at Sulaiman Maku's time. They inevitably had an effect on the evolution of Pashto literature and its style of writing. Bearing in mind these factors I evaluate Sulaiman's writing.

His Pashto

From the perspective of Pashto language Sulaiman's prose has two facets. Both are important from the viewpoint of literary evaluation. The first reflects his style of sentence structure and the amalgamation of statements. They show how he addresses his ideas, how he writes and what is the style of his penmanship? Second what is the wording of his sentences? Are there words that have got out of use in the language over time such as those used by poets of the past? Analyzing his work we see that it is fluent and does not contain mistakes. He did not use long, complex sentences and it has a flavor of common speech.

Sulaiman was a master in uniting sentences. His statements are short and clear. He breaks his sentences and each subject has a different predicate. He does not use one idea to expound different and distorted subjects. Because of this his style is fluid and he is an eloquent writer.

Such is a natural and original way of expressing thought in Pashto. The sentences are short, the statements separate, there are few twists and one sentence is not superimposed on the other. This style was also used in old Persian prose. Later, when the unattractive style of the Mughal period gained prominence, Persian literature lost its lucidity, eloquence and sweetness. Below are examples of both types of Persian prose. First the simple and short sentences of Abu al Fazl Baihaqi are presented: pas rasool bar pai khast wa manshoor wa nama ra bar thakht nehad wa amir bosa dad wa bosahl zuzanee ra esharat kard tha beyestad wa khwandan gereft

(Then the messenger got up and laid the decree and letter on the table. The amir gave the signal to Boshal Zozane to get up and recite).3

In contrast the complex sentences of Ata Malik Juwaini, written several centuries later in the style of the Mughal era, are difficult to understand and paraphrase: ba sabab tagheer rozgar wa taaseer falak dwar wa gardesh gardoon wa ekhtelaf a`lam boqalmoon madares dars mundares, wa ma`lem a`lm muntames gashta wa tabaqaa tulaba aan dar dast lagad kobe hawadis paimal zamana ghadar wa rozgar makar shudand, wa ba sunoof suroof fetn was sahn gereftar wa dar ma`raz tafruqa wa yawar ma`raz suyoof abdar shudand wa dar hejab turab mutawari mandand.

(In order to change life-style and the effects of heavens, the revolution of the revolver, and the differences of variegated world, the school of the teacher and the instructors of corrupt knowledge, the student body has become the target of the events of fateful and cruel time and they have become entangled in the classroom of vissitude and in the midst of dismay they are the target of fluid swords and have remained concealed in the veil of dust).4

In old Persian, the writings of Bihaqi and his contemporaries resemble natural speech. After the Mughal era most writings deviate so much from speech that their anomalies can be detected at first glance with ease.

The Pashto prose of Sulaiman Maku resembles fluid Persian prose, prevalent during the fifth and sixth centuries Hejira. The following sentence is presented to show his style: naql kawa sei che pa rozgar da ghazi shabuddin che pa deli kei hagha star wakman tatobie wur wa sanda aw huree marr soo.

(Let it be narrated in honor of Ghazi Shahabuddin. In Delhi the great king provided him a house and he died there).5

Summary

Sulaiman's style is not much different from general speech, his sentences are short and his expressions clear. One sentence is not superimposed on the other and he has used certain literary expressions which are not in use at the present time. For example he states:tanakee wachawdele da psoo (My feet's blisters burst). By this he means to rest in the house. daer zasht yae wawazhal (he killed many). In today's speech only one of the first two words is used and both are not used together. The word zasht corresponding to sakht (hard) of Persian which was used extensively in Samanian and Ghaznavid Persian to express diligence. Even today in Pashto it is sometimes used such as sakht yae wawahaa (he beat him hard). In another place he says: pur narree da stan zhagoo wa meaning his spirituality was well known in the world. Neither the words stan nor zhagoo are in use today. It is possible that these were the expressions of the time which have lost their usage in the language.

There are several other words in these pages that are rarely used in today's language or they are not in use. For example, the infinitive grohedal was in use. During the old times its root was groh meaning belief. Groh has been used in the poems of Shaikh Reza and Nasr Ludi. Sulaiman Maku has used it as a verb wa grohaed meaning he began to believe. It was used by later authors such as Khushal Khan Khatak says:

na yae zhrra pa ma narmezhie na grohezi

khudaya tsa me sarekar sha la kafera

(Neither did I captivate his heart nor his belief. God with what kind of Kafir am I dealing)

Bamya (bomya) in the old times meant a guide. Sulaiman writes: tso che bamya soo da wagarrya meaning he became the leader of the people. This word is not used in the language now. Other rare words used are: parreki (a poem), ster tshastan (Great God), garoon (count), kol (family), dasan (enemy), zhobla (battle), and words which are not in use now but were used in Pashto poetry until 1000 H/1592 AD.

The Influence of Persian

The heavy influence of Persian prose is also visible in Sulaiman's writing. This is a natural phenomenon as a language is always under the influence of the environment in which it develops. There are certain sentences and structures seen in Sulaiman's work which show the influence of Persian. For example using the governing noun at the beginning such as aw tanakee wachawdele da psoo (blisters burst of the feet) which should be da psoo tanakee wachawdele (the feet's blisters burst) and other such structures which show the influence of Persian. Even though Sulaiman does not use many Persian words, they can be seen in his writing. For example he uses the word rozgar (period) exactly in the same fashion like the renowned old writers of the Persian language. Baihaqi states: wa ba rozgar sultan mazee choon ma`dan wali makran guzashta shud (during the time of the former sultan, Maadan passed away). Sulaiman says: pa rozgar da ghazi shahabuddin che pur kufr yarghal woo (Under the patronage of Sultan Shahabuddin who vanquished the infidels). In another place he writes: pa rozgar da sheikh betnay ke da dha wror sarban numaedah (Under the patronage of Shaikh Betnai, his brother was known as Sarban).

There are other pure Persian words in his writing such as darkhwast (request), sepas (grace), durood (salutation), khak-e pai (at service) , khuda-e mehraban (kind God) and more indicating the influence of Persian in his work, which develops as a result of two languages evolving in the same environment. This is especially true of Pashto and Persian, two languages having the same roots.

The Influence of Arabic

In Sulaiman's writing the influence of Arabic is greater than Persian. The reason is that at the time Arabic was the religious and learning language among the Pashtoons hence those who had interest with knowledge had to learn Arabic because in most subjects literature was available in Arabic only. It seems that Sulaiman was a religious personality who was inclined toward Sufism and was a student of religious science. As such subjects were available only in Arabic therefore he must have read Arabic texts. Thus there was extensive influence of Arabic literature and mysticism on his life.

The influence of Arabic is also prevalent in the Samanian and Ghorid era Persian, such as Tarekh-e Bal`ami, Tafseer-e Tabari, Baihaqi's Tarekh al Subaktageen and others. As Persian was under the effect of Arabic therefore the influence of Arabic on Pashto writing has been two fold i.e direct from Arabic and Persian.

A contemporary Pashtoon writer comments on Sulaiman's work as follows: "The main issue which comes to light in his writing is that the influence of Arabic is evident in it. The structure of sentences and expressions are under the effect of Persian and Arabic. I cannot say that during the time Pashto's natural form was such, but it is possible that Sulaiman was a student of Arabic. Therefore when he wrote Pashto prose, he was influenced by Arabic." The use of Arabic terms such aa qutb (pole), kudwat-al-waseleen (model of unity), maraqed (sepulchers) and others are seen. The truth is that during that time, beside Arabic there was no other medium of learning.

The effect of Arabic on his writing is clear in the following sentences:

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The effect of Arabic on his writing is clear in the following sentences:

1. wayam hamd awo sepas da loi khdawand (I praise the Almighty God).

2. naql kaandi che sheikh betnay husaed pa ghra da kesi baandi (It is said that Shaikh Betnai lived on Kesi mountain).
3. sarban na durlood zamum (Sarban did not have children).

4. khuda-e mehraban da isma`il pa barakat sarban tha naseeb krra dunei zamun che ter wass taer sho garoon da hagoo (Kind God, through Ismail's blessing, gave Sarban countless children).
5. daka swa mzaka da pashtankhwa da doi pa kole (The Pashtoonkhwa land was filled with their families).
In these sentences Arabic style is evident. Those who are familiar with Arabic know its influence on the structure of sentences, therefore I do not want to go into detailed explanation into this matter but would like to show how these sentences are used in Pashto at the present time:6

1.da loi khodai hamd aw sepas wayam

2. dasei naql kandi che sheikh betnay da kesi pa ghra oweseda

3. sarban zamun na durlodel

4. mehraban khudai da ismail pa barakat sarban tha duni zaman warkrra che aus da hagho ganoon tur waes taer sho
5. da duei pa kole da pashtoonkhwa zmaka daka shwa

If we look carefully at all these sentences we will realize that the verb precedes its related pronoun, which is common in Arabic writing. If the first sentence is written in Arabic it will read as al hamdlellah al azeem. The Pashto sentence has been written similarly. Such representation of sentence structuring was also present in Persian writing dating to the fifth century Hejira. Baihaqi's work shows such imitation: amir gerd bar gerd qala`h begasht, jang jaiha bedeed, nanamood pesh-e chashmash wa hemat beland wa shuja`ash aan kala` wa mardan bas chezee-e (The amir went around the fortress and saw the battle. None of the warriors of the fortress dared to challenge his bravery and valor). In another place he states: amir neshate sharab kard, wa

nanamood bas turb-e ki delash sakht mashgool bood (The amir tasted the wine but did not utter a word for his heart was vexed). In the Pashto sentences of Sulaiman similar influence is seen such as: naql kawa se (it has been narated) or hasi naql kandi (such they say). Writers wrote in this fashion due to the ritual of the time and such influence is clear in both Pashto and Persian literature.

The Distinction of Sulaiman's Writing

After analyzing the primary elements of the first work of prose of Pashto literature, i.e. the effect of Persian and Arabic literature, some of its other important literary distinctions are presented:

1. Abridgment

Abridgment of sentences is an important facet of Sulaiman's writing. This distinction is similar to the old literary works of Persian. Prior to the Ghaznavid renaissance (400 H/1010 AD), Persian writing was abridged and written in short sentences as described earlier.

2. Description of meaning

There are certain sentences in Sulaiman's writing which have been merely used for the purpose of emphasis. This characteristic is rarely seen in the Samanid style of Persian. The Persian writers of the Ghaznavid period used the style extensively though. To explain an issue they expressed the theme in repeated sentences.7 For example: pa wyala da arghasan hosayzam aw pa dei mzukoo payayzham (I live by the Arghasan stream. I am a resident of these lands). sheikh betnay hoseda pa ghrah bandi aw halta dera woo (Shaikh Betnai lived by the mountain, he resided there.) da doi pa khedmat khakpai waam, aw har kala pa salaam warta walarr (I was at their service, and ready to serve them all the time). In these examples the second sentence is used for emphasis purposes only.

3. Repetition of verbs

Persian writers, prior to the Ghaznavid period, considered the use of verb in each sentence important, even though one verb was repeatedly used in several sentences. Such repetition was acceptable during the Samanid period, but later it was considered as a literary fault. Even words and sentences were repeated. Such repetition was also present in the Avesta and Pahlavi languages and had infiltrated Persian also. It was considered an old literary provision.8 For example Rudaki explains the teeth of youth as follows: sepaed seem rada bood wa dur wa marjan bood, setara sahare bood wa qatra baran bood (A white row of pearls, akin the morning star and the drops of rain.)

Here the word bood has been repeated four times. Or for example the following sentences which were written around 360 H/971 AD: man khwastam ke ketab-e bena kunam wa har che shayesta

andaroo yad kunam...wa bas quwatha-e shaan payda kunam (I wanted to write a book to contain anything worthy in it...and know their strength).9

The repetition of verbs is also seen in Sulaiman's work, which is a manifestation of older writings. Sometimes he uses so many verbs that a line is laden with them. For example he states: bakhtyar pa pashto sandaree krrena, awsie toyawena, khudai tha naree krri, ghalboley kri, parreki larena (Bakhtyar writes poetry in Pashto, sheds tears, laments to God, wails and he has poems).

Here five verbs have been used in one statement, one has been repeated twice. It should be mentioned that this natural and fluent style was good and the inadmissible tendency to eliminate verbs started later. In present writing we should not follow this tendency and should adhere to the old fluent style of writing.

4. The elimination of Verbs

As mentioned above, the early writers did not consider repetition of verbs as a fault. They sometimes used one verb at the end of several sentences. After 400 H/1021 AD, during the Ghaznavid period, writers started to eliminate adjoining verbs from sentences and created a new style of expression. For example in these sentences of Baihaqi (ast), which is an adjoining verb, has been eliminated: kheyma muselmani mak ast wa sutoon padshah wa tanab wa mekhha ra`yat. Later the verb (ramanad) has been eliminated in three places:10 pas choon negah karda ayad, asl sutoonast, wa kheima badan ba paa bast wa har gah wai sust shud wa biyaftad na kheima wa na tanab wa na meikh. It should have been written as: na kheima manad, na tanab manad na meikh manad.

Sulaiman's style of writing shows some resemblance to the Persian of Ghaznavid period as some of the verbs are eliminated and their repetition does not occur. For example: wayam hamd wa sepas da loi khawand, aw durood pur mohamad mustafa che dei badar da koneno aw rahmat da saqalani.... Here one (wayam) with three (da) and another (dei) together with (rahmat) have been eliminated.

5. Rhyming words

Another important characteristic of Sulaiman's style is that at the end of the verbs the rhyming letter (noon) has been added. This characteristic is prevalent in the later works of Pire Roshan and Darweza, where at the end of joined sentences the rhyme (yana) has been added. Such rhyming is common at the end of syllables in Pashto landye such as (khurena, kawena, rawrrena) instead of (khuree, kawei, rawrree). For example: aw sandrey krrena, ausee toyawena, parreki larena. Here the use of verbs krrei, toyawei, larei would suffice, while (na) is redundant.

Rhyme and Meter

Former writers sometimes used rhyming in their sentences. This style was not prevalent in Persian prose during the Samanid and Ghaznavid periods. Later when prose writers started copying Arabic works this style became prevalent. Baihaqi also used such rhyming in some of his works. For example he states: fasle khwanam az dunya-e ferebenda, ba yak dast shakar pashenda, wa badegar dast zahr kashenda (I read a chapter of this deceptive world, showing sweetness with one hand and poison with the other).11

Although Sulaiman's prose is not written in a rhyming style, but like Baihaqi and others he has used rhyming words from time to time. As stated earlier he uses (na) at the end of verbs to rhyme phrases such as: aw maraqed da awliawoo aw waselunoo mei palatal aw pa har lorei mei kamelan mondal (I searched for the shrine of saints and looked for the learned in every direction), or: pa jobla kei malakyar daa parrekei wawayal, che ghazeyan wa paredal aw pa tseer da zmareyoo wur toi swal (In battle Malikyar recited these lines; the warriors were incited and like lions they leaped into battle).
There are certain stylistic inhibitions in Sulaiman's prose which resemble the style of Persian writers of the Samanid and Ghaznavid period. It is clear that Sulaiman also came under the influence of the literary style which prevailed in Central Asia three or four centuries before him. Since this evaluation is based on only a few pages of his book it does not reflect the overall style of writing of the time. An analysis of the prevalent style of the time would be possible if we had another work of prose at our disposal. It is therefore better to leave an analysis of the topic to a future time when other literary documents are found. It would then be possible to elaborate on the subject with regard to the literary style of the time.

Some Undesirable Inquisitions of Sulaiman's Prose

Until now we have discussed the good part of Sulaiman's work and evaluated the influence of Persian and Arabic on his writing. His style contains certain joined and chained phrases which are undesirable and do not blend well with good prose. It is important to note, however, that the few pages of the book have been scribed in very bad hand writing which makes its reading tedious. It is difficult to visualize whether the mistakes in the book are those of the author or the scribe. Sulaiman Maku's style of writing seems to be fluid and devoid of flaws. It is reasonable to conclude that the mistakes seen in the structure of some of the sentences can be attributed to the scribe who either made errors while copying the work or brought about undesirable changes as exemplified in some parts of the text.

THE TEXT

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God and salutations be on the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, who is most exalted and a symbol of kindness among mankind. May there be great beneficence on his followers and friends who enlightened both worlds. I am the humble Sulaiman, son of Barak Khan Maku Sabzi, who lives by the Arghasan stream. In the year six hundred and twelve Hejira, I set forth to roam the dales and villages of Pashtoonkhwa to collect the works of saints and learned men of letters. During my quest I was on the outlook for men of erudition in every direction I went and always ready to serve them.

After completing this journey and resting for a while I sought the assistance of Almighty God to help me write the memoirs of learned men and their wise sayings so that Pashtoons may read about them.

One who has reached God, most exalted Shaikh, Betnai. With God's recognition he was the most learned scholar of them all. It has been narrated that Shaikh Betnai lived on Kesi mountain. He always prayed in the service of God and fasted. Many a nights he worshipped the Almighty.

It has been narrated friends, that Shaikh Betnai had a brother named Sarban, of whom Betnai was very fond. Sarban did not have a son and always asked his brother for his blessing. Betnai gave his son, Ismail to his brother for adoption. Ismail grew with his uncle. With Ismail's blessing, the beneficent God gave Sarban countless sons. Ismail's shrine is on Kesi mountain which I have visited.

It has been narrated that when Betnai became old he always praised God and asked the Almighty for prosperity and blessing in his household and that of his brother. The Almighty accepted his prayers and filled the land of Pashtoonkhwa with their progeny. It is said that Shaikh Betnai always recited this poem as he roamed the valleys of Kesi mountain at night:

O Great God with your grace

And your love in every place,

The mountains rise with might

Bringing forth life in sight.

Here at the mountain's base

Our tents are pitched face to face.

May these household spread wide and odd,

O Great God, O Great God.

Here in our camp fires burn,

In these dwellings we learn,

That with your grace we are blessed

By no other force are we impressed.

Yours' are the earth and sky,

The dead in your soil peacefully lie.

You protect us from evil and fraud

O Great God, O Great God.

It has been narrated that Ghazi Shahabuddin, who vanquished the infidels, was accompanied in his battles by Shaikh Malikyar who was a domicile of Gharsheen. Shahabuddin became a great ruler of Delhi and later died there.

It has been narrated that in battle the Moslems were repulsed and the infidels gained an upper hand. Just as the Moslem army was to be crushed by the infidels and the enemy was to claim victory Shaikh Malikyar suddenly appeared and attacked the enemy, bringing havoc among them and killing many. The other Moslem warriors also unsheathed their swords and fought side by side with Malikyar, vanquishing the foe. With the bravery of Shaikh Malikyar, the Almighty bestowed unprecedented victory upon them. During the battle Malikyar recited these lines which incited the warriors who leapt into the battle field like lions.

God is our savior

In the battle field.

Our land has been usurped

O brave fighters, do not yield.

God is our savior.

Sharpen your swords

Smite hard the foe.

Stand steadfast in battle

Put up a mighty show.

God is our savior.

If we defiantly resolve,

That we shall succeed,

With Islam's patronage

We will be winners indeed.

God is our savior.

Come forth O fighters

Stand in a row.

In support of Shahab,

Put up a valiant show.

God is our savior.

It has been narrated that Shaikh Malikyar always read the poem of the great saint Shaikh Ismail and exclaimed that this saint was the son of Sarban.

Run away from the devil

When you see its cursed mark

Where the ray looses its light

The whole world will become dark.

Satin is a curse to man

Bringing forth misfortune great

He who is able to rid himself of Satin

Will live in a happy state.

But if you surrender to the devil

You will have a dreadful fate.

It has been narrated that Bakhtyar was a holy saint whose miracles were widespread. Musa, the grand father of Qutb, left the Bakhtyars and settled in a country known as Sind. The son of Musa, Shaikh Ahmad, was a spiritual personality and blessed his son, Bakhtyar, with piety. He became a religious scholar and saint and had a large number of followers. Bakhtyar recited poetry in Pashto in which he lamented to God. He has many odes one of which is the following:

Sorrow has pierced my aching heart

Come look at me sweetheart

In your separation I burn

See how I have been split apart.

Come look at me sweetheart,

Come look at me sweetheart.

The fire of separation is alight

In which my body and soul burn.

Love has made me afflicted

Like a moth do I yearn.

Come look at me sweetheart,

Come look at me sweetheart.

The tresses on your forehead

Has put a fire in me alight.

In this wretched state Bakhtyar

Cannot put another fight.

Come look at me sweetheart,

Come look at me sweetheart.

NOTES

The incident in which Sarban asks his brother for benevolence has also been mentioned by Ne`matullah in Makhzan-e Afghani. He states: It has been narrated that Sarban, the elder brother of Betnai, of whom he was very fond, was without a son. One day he visited his brother's house and pleaded to him. 'Oh brother you pray for everyone but pay no attention to me.' Hazrat Betnai told him: 'Go take one of my sons and raise him...' After that the Shaikh allowed his son, Ismail, to

be raised by his brother...12 The writing of Sulaiman Maku is four centuries older than Ne`matullah's narration. The two episodes resemble each other closely. This shows that before 1000 Hejira traditional episodes, dealing with Shaikh Betnai, were prevalent in the Pashto language.

We do not have any further information on Shaikh Betnai nor do historians mention anything about the time he was alive. From the pages of Pata Khazana (Hidden Treasure) it is evident that Ismail, the son of Bet Neka was a contemporary of Kharasboon. He died in 411 H/1046 AD. From this it can be ascertained that Ismail lived around 400 H/1010 AD and his father and uncle were alive around 350 H/961 AD.

Shaikh Betnai's Poetry

In old Pashto poetry the single poem of Shaikh Betnai is a work of great importance. Sulaiman Maku refers to this piece in the context that when Shaikh Betnai became old he prayed to God so that his tribe may grow and recited his famous poem. This piece dates to around 350 H/961 AD and the words used in the poem show that they belong to that time. Some of the words are out of use now. For example (zhawi) s not used to mean people or animals and this word is seen only in old literature. In present day language the word is used to mean to make lively. This connotation is also out of use at the present time. Hask has been used to mean the sky. The use of the word in this sense shows old usage. Formerly the sky was referred to as hask but now it is used to signify anything elevated. Such evolution of the word took place later. It resembles sama of Arabic which means the sky and anything elevated.

There is little influence of foreign languages on this poem. It is a manifestation of those poems which were recited in a mountainous setting and were free from the influence of Persian and Arabic. Like the poetry of Amir Krorr and the Ludis foreign words have not been used except for the name of God, which has common usage in eastern languages. The reason for its purity is that Shaikh Betnai lived in the isolation of the Sulaiman mountain and his speech had not come under foreign influence. The metering and rhyme of the poem resemble that of national Pashto sonnets and it has one repetitive line i.e. O Great God, O Great God. Such measure is used in Pashto poetry up to the present time. It seems that this style dates back to the ancient times. From the point of view of its content and literary thought it resembles old Aryan ballads because in old Aryan tribes the family or tribe had great importance and most of the social fabric of life revolved around the family.13 They strived to increase the family and considered it the center of affluence. If we were to compare the poem of Shaikh Betnai with Rig Veda it resembles the statement: God is the giver of life and is the king. He is the bestower of families...14

Ismail

Pashto authors and autobiographers write that Ismail was the son of Shaikh Betnai but was raised by his uncle Sarban. Therefore he is famous as Sarbanie. Sulaiman Maku writes: Ismail grew in the household of Shaikh Betnai. He lived near Sulaiman mountain and later died there. He further states: Ismail's shrine is situated on Kesi mountain which I have visited.

Ne`matullah in Makhzan-e Afghani provides a same kind of account: When Ismail grew up to be an adult he became a pious man. This Shaikh Ismail is the son of Hazrat Bet... Shaikh Ismail Sarbani was a pious personality and spent his time in the service of God and religion. His fame grew and people from far away lands came to his service... Both Sulaiman Maku and Ne`matullah state that his domicile was the Sulaiman mountain. Ne`mtullah further writes that his shrine is in a place known as Waza Khwa. This place lies at the foothill of the Sulaiman mountain. Furthermore, Ismail's life has also been discussed in Pata Khazana. It is stated that he was a contemporary of Kharashboon who died in 421 H/1030 AD. From this it can be concluded that Ismail also lived at that time. Ismail was a spiritual personality of his family. From the writings of Makhzan-e Afghani it is clear that he went on a journey and met holy people.

Ismail's poetry

Ismail's poetry has been recorded in two sources. The first poem is the one mentioned by Sulaiman Maku in his Tazkerah where he states: "It has been narrated that Shaikh Malikyar recited the poetry of the great saint Ismail and expressed that this saint was the son of Sarban. The whole text of his poem Stay away from Satin has been documented in Tazkera." His other poem which signifies family feelings has been noted in Pata Khazana. The author of the book writes: It is said that one day Kharasboon and Ismail were sitting in the presence of Sarban and Betnai Neka in their house in Kesi. Kharasboon was asked by his father and uncle to embark on his journey. Upon hearing that Kharasboon was to leave, Ismail Baba recited this nara aloud:

The time of separation has come not knowing,

From Kesi mountain Kharasboon is agoing.

O brother Kharasboon as you leave tomorrow,

Look at my weary heart's sorrow.

As you depart for the Margha badland

What means such parting, I do not understand?

For God's sake, Kharasboon, my friend

Don't forget your kin to the very end.

My heart is a flutter, as I see you depart,

Your separation is like a fire, burning me apart.

Ismail was a holy person. His first poem has a flavor of advice and he has used certain Arabic words which are a manifestation of his spiritual personality. His second poem has a nationalistic flavor and is symbolic of the prosody and tune of Pashto language. It does not contain any foreign words. We can say that this poem is related to the ancient literature of the language and is considered a masterpiece which has not been tainted by the influence of other languages. Such naree (plural) are commonly used in Pashto folk stories with a distinct metering pattern and are recited in a special tune.

Malikyar Gharsheen

Gharsheen is a spiritual Pashtoon tribe. These people made fertile a barren mountain and are thus known as Gharsheen. They live near Kandahar and their numbers are low.15 Malikyar was a spititual personality of this tribe who has been mentioned by Pashtoon historians. Na`matullah Herawi writes: Malikyar was a contemporary of Shaikh Abu Bakr Tousi and possessed land in Delhi. This property was given to him as a gift by Sultan Shahbuddin Ghouri during his conquest of Multan. His family lives there.16 Prior to this statement, Sulaiman Maku wrote a similar narration about him several hundred years earlier. Malikyar lived at the time of Sultan Mu`izuddin Ghouri. He was a companion of the Sultan in his battles. Since the Ghorid ruler attacked Multan in 571 H/1176 AD for the first time we can thus estimate that he lived then.

From the account of Sulaiman Maku it is evident that Malikyar was a valiant person. He was a man of sword and letters and aided the Sultan in his battles. Beside being a warrior he was also a literary figure. He was a poet himself and recited the works of other Pashtoon poets also just as Sulaiman Maku narrates the poem of Shaikh Ismail as recited by Malikyar.

Malikyar was also known as an ascetic and a holy man. Historians have written the title of piran with his name. His spirituality was so widespread that two and a half centuries after his death his name was commemorated by Sultan Feroz Shah (725-790 H/1325-1388 AD). When the king developed Feroz Abad he named a building in memory of Malikyar Piran. This incident has been mentioned by a historian of the time, Ziauddin Barni (758 H/1357 AD).17 Malikyar lived in Delhi and died there. He is buried near the shrine of Shaikh abu Bakr Tousi.

The poem of valor of Malikyar which has been written in Tazkerat-ul-Awlia has a flavor of the feelings expressed by ancient tribes. It is one of those poems which the ancient Pashtoons recited in battles to boost the morale of young warriors to fight bravely. The wordings and style of the poem are pure. Like other nationalistic poetry it has a repetitive line which is repeated at the end of each verse. The poem shows that the poet was also a good orator who managed to incite his audience to the theme of his nationalistic and religious message. Beside the names of people all the other letters are pure Pashto words. In the last line mlaa which has been used to mean a friend and companion is an old word which has also been mentioned in the elegy of Asad Suri.

This shows that the poem belongs to the old era of Pashto literature, a time when such words were in use.
After the ballad of Amir Krorr this is the second oldest epic available in Pashto. The difference is that Amir Krorr presents himself as a gallant warrior and leader and portrays himself as a strong man. Malikyar speaks as an instigator and molds nationalistic feelings in a religious context. He tries to boost the morale of the troops through his poetry. Malikyar was a poet, saint and warrior and all these features are portrayed in his work.

Qutbuddin Bakhtyar

Qutbuddin was the son of Ahmad and the grandson of Musa. He belonged to the Bakhtyar tribe of the Pashtoons and was a celebrated saint of his time. He is famous in India up to this day. Foreign historians have not mentioned his name but Pashtoon historians consider him a holy personality. Na`matullah in Makhzan-e Afghani speaks in detail about his work and states: "Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtyar, may he be blessed, was the son of Ahmad bin Musa. He was a resident of Aush, which is a dependence of Baghdad. He was born in the year 575 H/1180 AD. When he was 25 years old, Hazrat Ma`uddin Sajzi came to Aush and Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtyar became his desciple... Later he accompanied Shaikh Jalaluddin to India and met Ghous-al-alam Shaikh Bahauddin in Multan..." 18

Na`matullah, historian of the Pashtoons, refers to Qutbuddin Bakhtyar as Qutb Afghan. He also mentions the name of other personalities of his tribe such as Khwaja Yahya Bakhtyar, Shaikh Shahab Bakhtyar, Shah Abubakr Bakhtyar and others. Bakhtyar is a famous and spiritual Pashtoon tribe which until the present time is engaged in trading and agriculture near the Sulaiman mountain. Historians were not aware of this tribe and therefore do not refer to Qutbuddin as a Pashtoon. They only write Bakhtyar with his name. Fereshta states that he was born in Aush, which was a city of Transoxiana19 and Abulfazl A`lami considers him to be from Aush of Fargana.20

Aush or Auch were two ancient cities on the other side of Seyhoon.21 Ibn Khardabah states that this was a large village seven parasangs from Quba, and ten parsangs from Auzgand.22 Yakoot also considers the towns to be separate entities. He says that Aush was in Fargana and Auch along the banks of Seyhoon.23 If we consider the statements made by historians that Qutbudin lived in Aush and that he was a Pashtoon, then it is clear that his father or grand father had gone to Aush and he was born there just as Sulaiman Maku writes: "It has been narrated that Bakhtyar was a great saint whose nobility and generosity was widespread. Musa, the grand father of Qutb, left the Bakhtyars and settled in a country known as Sind."24

This statement corroborates the fact that Qutubuddin's grandfather left his homeland and settled by the Indus instead of the Oxus. If we look at the history of the place there was a settlement by the Indus (Sind) which was called Auch or Aucha. Historians mention it as a place near Multan in the context of the conquests of Sultan Mu`izuddin Ghori.25 From this it can be seen that Auch

was a famous city by the Indus. If Qutbuddin's father and grandfather lived in this city, just as other contemporary holy figures of his fathers time lived in Multan, then the statement of Sulaiman Maku is correct. At any rate Qutuddin was a Pashtoon, who had left the Bakhtyar tribe and lived in Auch of the Indus or the Aush of Oxus. As stated earlier he gained great fame in India. According to Makhzan-e Afghani, Ayeen-e Akbari and Mukkhberul al Waseleen he died during the third month of 633 H/1236 AD at the age of 48 and was buried in Delhi. His shrine is famous until this day.

Qutbuddin's poetry

From the writing of Sulaiman Maku it is clear that Qutbuddin held an esteemed position in the religious world. Most memoirs of saints mention his biography. Beside being a holy figure he was also a good Pashto poet. Sulaiman Maku includes his poem of love in his book. Since Sulaiman was a contemporary of Qutbuddin his statement is therefore correct when he says: "Bakhtyar writes poetry in Pashto, sheds tears, laments to God and cries. He has written poetry one of which is the following:

Sorrow has pierced my aching heart

Come look at me sweetheart.

This poem represents the old form of Pashto poetry and it does not contain a single foreign word. It has been written in a simple style but the thought is deep. It exemplifies the feelings of the lover. Like contemporary folk poetry it has repetitive lines. It shows that Qutbuddin felt the pangs of love and Sulaiman Maku expresses his feelings in the following words: He constantly cries and laments, recites love poetry. There is only one poem left from this famous poet which expresses his deep feelings of love. Qutbuddin also wrote a divan (book of poetry) in Persian. The whole work is devoted to love poems. His Persian poetry is not fluent though because his mother tongue was Pashto and it is not in par with the literary undertakings of the language. His style of writing is faulty and the wording twisted as seen in these lines:

har ke ra bar sar-e koi tho maqamash bashad

sherbat-e wasl tho har lahza ba kamash bashad

(He who finds a place in your street, will receive the sweet syrup of your company every moment.)

In the frist line (ra) and (maqamash) do not match. The use of such words is inconsistent with the fluency of the art of poetics. It is clear from his Persian poetry that the poems were written by to a person whose mother tongue was different as there are numerous aberrations and mistakes in the work.

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